



Staff Report

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING EXTENDED CONSTRUCTION HOURS FOR THE PG&E RULE 20A PROJECT ON OLD COUNTY ROAD

Honorable Mayor and Council Members:

Summary

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) requests the City of Belmont to authorize extending construction work hours of 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Saturday for the PG&E Rule 20A Project on Old County Road.

Background

Old County Road is currently served by overhead power and communication utilities (with the exception of the Ralston corridor and the Sterling Point condominiums), as is one block of Masonic Way between Old County Road and Granada. Placing these utilities underground has been proposed to improve the safety, convenience and aesthetics of these heavily traveled streets.

The City adopted Ordinance 391 – *Regulations and Procedures for the Removal of Overhead Utility Facilities and the Installation of Underground Facilities in Underground Utility District* – on April 8, 1968. This ordinance enables the City to designate underground utility districts by resolution. On April 8, 2003, the City Council established the Old County Road and Masonic Way Underground Utility District, Resolution 9389. The ordinance was subsequently amended on May 13, 2003 to allow the use of Rule 20A funds for:

1. The installation of up to 100 feet of each utility customer's underground electric service lateral occasioned by the undergrounding; and
2. The conversion of electric service panels to accept underground service, up to \$1,500 or the maximum amount allowed by PUC Rule 20A, whichever is greater per service entrance, excluding permit fees.

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Discussion

Public Works staff has been coordinating this project with PG&E since 2003. However, because of the tremendous construction work loads, PG&E has not constructed any Rule 20A projects in San Mateo County for many years. In 2005, the City received an approval of \$134,000 from the Surface Transportation Fund (STP) for pavement rehabilitation on Old County Road south of Ralston Avenue. This federal fund has an obligation deadline in FY 2008. Staff has urged PG&E to expedite the Rule 20A project so that the roadway can be repaved prior to the expiration of the

federal fund. PG&E has recently completed the design of the undergrounding project on Old County Road.

In the beginning of May, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company will begin work on the joint underground utility trenches along Old County Road from Ralston Avenue southward toward the city limit. Street construction is scheduled to start in the week of May 5, 2008. The project length for this section of work is two months.

The undergrounding project will occur in three phases. During the first phase (installation of the substructure), crews will dig trenches in the street. They will then place the conduits (pipes) for the new electric, telephone, and cable TV services.

The second phase will consists of each utility pulling wire through the underground conduits and installing ancillary equipment, such as transformers and switch boxes. After installation of the cables and other equipment, each utility will energize their facilities and begin “cutting over” individual properties from the overhead to underground service. Finally, once all the properties have been converted and are receiving their utilities underground, the overhead wires and the wooden utility poles will be removed (phase three).

PG&E has provided the City a tentative schedule for the remaining work. The installation of trenches along Old County Road north of Ralston Avenue will begin in September 2008. The rest of the project (Phase 2 and 3) will begin in the second quarter of 2009 and be completed by early 2010. The construction beginning this May is limited only to the installation of trenches and conduits south of Ralston Avenue so that this part of Old County Road can be paved per the federal funding requirements.

Property owners along Old County Road are obligated to provide service lateral (pipes) from the electrical, cable TV, and telephone terminals of their building to one foot beyond the building line on the property. Property owners are required to engage the services of a licensed electrical contractor who will extend the conduit (pipe) from the outside into the building and perform necessary internal wiring work. A building permit is required for this electrical work. Part of this work will be paid by the Rule 20A fund as stated above. However, this work is only required in Phase 2 which is anticipated to begin in the second quarter of 2009. A community meeting was held on May 1, 2008 to inform all the property owners on Old County Road about the impact of the project and their responsibilities for electrical conversion on their properties.

In order to minimize the impact to the local businesses and residences, and expedite the construction schedule to meet the federal funding requirements, PG&E requests the City to authorize extended construction work hours for the Rule 20A project. The purpose of the Construction Noise Ordinance calls for creating “*a noise environment that maintains a healthy living environment; fosters relaxation and recreation; is conducive to the work environment; and provides pleasant living conditions...*”. This ordinance was also enacted “*...to limit construction hours and require noise mitigation of construction equipment adjacent to noise sensitive areas.*” Finally, the Ordinance describes the necessity in establishing such an ordinance

to promote the health, safety, and welfare of the public, which is consistent with the adopted goals and policies of the General Plan.

The City Council has in the past granted individual exceptions to the limit on construction hours for other development and capital improvement projects (an example of a major project being the Ralston/101 Interchange Project). These exceptions were deemed appropriate for such projects when the longer hours would not significantly affect the surrounding neighborhoods or the public health, safety, or welfare.

Staff has reviewed PG&E's request and notes the following:

- Noise generated from the railroad has more significant impact to the properties along Old County Road.
- All properties along Old County Road are zoned C3 (Highway Commercial) and C4 (Service Commercial) which are high density commercial areas.
- The nearest residential buildings are 250' from the project site.
- PG&E indicates that extended hours would reduce the total numbers of construction days and avoid an overtime-driven budget overrun.

In balancing all of these issues, staff believes the extended construction hours schedule is warranted for the project.

General Plan/Vision Statement

This project is consistent with the Construction Noise Ordinance and with the General Plan Public Facilities and Services Goals section (Paragraph 2041), which states "To provide public services at a level adequate to ensure public safety, health and welfare at the lowest possible cost; to establish and maintain all essential public services and facilities in a manner that ensures continued operation in time of emergency."

Fiscal Impact

There is no fiscal impact to the City. The Project will be paid for by the Rule 20A fund. The PG&E estimate for the construction of this phase is \$700,000.

Public Contact

A notice was sent to all property owners along Old County Road informing them about the impact of the project and their responsibilities for the electrical conversion. This information was also shared with the property owners in a community meeting held on May 1, 2008. A courtesy notice was sent to all property owners within 300 feet of the subject project informing them that the request for extended construction hours would be considered by the City Council on May 13, 2008. The Council agenda was posted.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the City Council adopt the attached resolution authorizing extended work

hours between 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday for the Rule 20A Project on Old County Road.

Alternatives

1. Take no action.
2. Refer back to staff for further information.
3. Deny approval.

Attachments

A. Resolution

Respectfully submitted,

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Senior Civil Engineer

Raymond E. Davis, III, PE, PTOE
Director of Public Works

Jack R. Crist
City Manager

Staff Contact:

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RESOLUTION NO. _____

**RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF BELMONT
AUTHORIZING EXTENDED CONSTRUCTION HOURS FOR THE
PG&E RULE 20A PROJECT ON OLD COUNTY ROAD**

WHEREAS, Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) requests the City to authorize extending construction hours for the Rule 20A Project south of Ralston Avenue; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council has in the past granted individual exceptions to the limit on construction hours for other development and capital improvement projects. These exceptions were deemed appropriate for such projects when the longer hours would not significantly affect the surrounding neighborhoods or the public health, safety and welfare; and,

WHEREAS, the City Council in reviewing the extended construction hours request, hereby finds that the noise generated from the railroad has more significant impact to the properties along Old County Road. In addition, all properties along Old County Road are zoned for commercial uses and there are no residential buildings within 250' of the project site which Council believes would be adversely affected by the requested construction hours schedule. Finally, authorizing the extended hours would reduce the total number of construction days and avoid an overtime-driven budget overrun for the project.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council of the City of Belmont hereby grants approval to PG&E for extended construction hours for the Rule 20A Project on Old County Road south of Ralston Avenue as follows:

- 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Monday through Friday
- 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. – Saturday

* * * * *

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was duly and regularly passed and adopted by the City Council of the City of Belmont at a regular meeting thereof held on May 13, 2008 by the following vote:

AYES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

NOES, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSTAIN, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

ABSENT, COUNCILMEMBERS: _____

CLERK of the City of Belmont

APPROVED:

MAYOR of the City of Belmont